



STATE OF CALIFORNIA
EDMUND G BROWN JR., Governor

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State Provides New Support for Service Dog Owners

Victims of Violent Crime Can Now Apply for Compensation for their Service Dog

Sacramento, CA – A person with a disability whose guide, signal, or service dog is disabled or killed from a violent crime may now apply for compensation from the California Victim Compensation Program (CalVCP) thanks to new legislation signed by Governor Brown that became effective January 1, 2015.

“These companion dogs provide an invaluable service to people with disabilities and make an incredible difference in their quality of life,” said Julie Nauman, Executive Officer of the Victim Compensation Program. “Our mission is to help victims restore as much as possible what is taken from them as a result of a violent crime. This is just another step in fulfilling that mission.”

Under the new legislation, AB 2264 (Levine), if a service, guide or signal dog should become disabled or killed as a result of a violent crime the owner may apply for compensation with CalVCP for veterinary services, or funds to afford a new service dog.

The bill also allows the service dog to be legally considered an extension of their owner and a vital component to their independence. This allows the victim to apply for compensation through CalVCP if the defendant is unable to make restitution directly.

Without this bill, a significant gap remains in the restitution process, and victims may end up being unable to pay for the required care for their injured canine partners.

This bill is supported by Guide Dogs for the Blind and Canine Companions for Independence. The underlying crime of assault on service dogs was established in 2005 but there was no compensation for the owners for their financial loss.

For more information regarding victim compensation, please visit <http://calvcp.ca.gov/>.

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The California Victim Compensation Program (CalVCP) provides compensation for victims of violent crime who are injured or threatened with injury. Among the crimes covered are domestic violence, child abuse, sexual and physical assault, homicide, robbery, and vehicular manslaughter. Last fiscal year, the program assisted nearly 600 individuals each week, and provided over \$61 million in compensation to crime victims.

If a person meets eligibility criteria, CalVCP will compensate many types of services when the costs are not covered by other sources. Eligible services include medical and dental care, mental health services, income loss, funeral expenses, rehabilitation and relocation. Funding for CalVCP comes from restitution fines and orders, penalty assessments levied on persons convicted of crimes and traffic offenses, and matching federal funds.